



**THE STORY  
BEHIND A  
BUDGET:**

# **ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON BOSTON'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

## THE CITY OF BOSTON MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR IMMIGRANT ADVANCEMENT

The Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) strives to strengthen the ability of immigrants to fully and equitably participate in economic, civic, social, and cultural life in Boston. MOIA also promotes the recognition and public understanding of the contributions of immigrants to the City. To learn more, visit [boston.gov/immigrants](https://boston.gov/immigrants).

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**Date:** August 2022

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City of Boston  
Immigrant Advancement



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research in this document would not have been made possible without the support of the immigrant-serving organizations and networks that helped us gather the data. Thank you for bringing this tool and helping us gather the voices of the populations you serve so arduously.

Thank you to all who shared the survey. We're are grateful to our Immigrants Lead Boston Alumni who ensured broad multilingual engagement and circulated the surveys with their contacts.

Thank you to our Economic Integration team with appreciation to Sarah Gordon and Yiran Yu, our Economic Integration Fellows, who tirelessly supported the implementation of the survey and dedicated themselves to processing the information.

Finally, thank you to all those who volunteered to their weekends and time in the gathering of survey responses in-person at three different locations to reach community members with non-digital data collection methods. The insight gained from these interactions helped lend depth to the findings.

The City of Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement strives to bring human centered policy and advocacy to all our work. We thank you for your support in this endeavor.



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# INTRODUCTION

*“Everything has risen in price and our income is very little,”* an East Boston resident shared with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA). This past spring and summer, our team collected qualitative and open-ended responses on how the pandemic has affected household spending habits from 153 constituents in 8 languages. The purpose of this study was to directly connect with constituents and gather qualitative data and experiences to complement larger quantitative findings on inflation. Therefore, while the sample size is small and not representative of Boston's immigrant population overall, the qualitative approach allowed us to collect rich information and engage with the community.

The above statement is true for many Bostonians as we continue to deal with the after-effects of COVID-19. Immigrants are particularly vulnerable to the public health crisis and economic turbulence given the equity gaps that proceeded the pandemic. Large-scale local and national research conducted by the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) shows that even prior to the pandemic, foreign-born residents in Boston were overrepresented in low-skill low-pay industries, such as construction, accommodation, and food services. The 2015-2019 American Community Survey shows that 28% of Bostonians were born abroad, among which 50% work in the construction, transportation, and food services.

These industries were particularly hard hit in the early days of the pandemic in 2020 and are still struggling to recuperate from the economic shocks of COVID-19. Massive job losses pushed immigrants from these affected industries into involuntary unemployment or underemployment; finding new jobs was particularly difficult for those lacking work authorization. Others worked in challenging “essential industry” environments, where social distancing was difficult and remote work was inaccessible. As a result of their immigration status, many were ineligible for COVID relief funds. Overall, Boston's immigrant population has been affected by disproportionate financial shocks.

This document will provide insights on how the economic pressures of COVID-19 have affected immigrant families spending on groceries and bills. We aim to raise up Boston's immigrant voices and thank participants for sharing their stories here.



1 Boston Planning & Development Agency, The Impact of COVID-19 on Immigrants: Looking Back and Looking Ahead, (Boston, MA: Boston Planning & Development Agency, n.d.).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- 90% of respondents to this survey **self-identified as immigrants**
- Most respondents are **low-income, renters**, and they are **concerned about affording food**
- On average, respondents **spend concerning little on food** (\$194 per person per month) and **shop for relatively large families** (3.8 people)
- If the respondents had **additional income**, the majority would use it on **groceries and shopping for food, rent, and bills**; they are **not prioritizing their long-term financial situation**, recreation, or inter-generational needs
- When it comes to describing the **reasons for concerns** about shopping budgets, survey respondents mentioned **“expensive”** and **“food”** most frequently
- The economic shock from COVID-19 **widened the gap between immigrants’ income and expenses**, which was exacerbated by **limited career choices and makes recovery for these populations more difficult**
- Job loss, difficulty to switch careers, rising rent, and inflation lead immigrants to **cut back** on certain food items in their groceries, as well as leisure activities **to ensure basic needs are met**

The MOIA team administered a survey to understand pandemic-related financial hardships among Boston’s immigrant households. We asked constituents about how the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on immigrants is felt and impacts their day-to-day life. This research supplements quantitative data analysis by the BPDA Research Division and helps bring “City Hall out of City Hall” with its human-centered design. By directly reaching out to constituents, the survey allowed MOIA to go out into the field to hear from Boston’s immigrants themselves, and in turn, advance solutions that meet their needs.



# METHODOLOGY

## HOW DID MOIA CONDUCT THIS RESEARCH?

The survey questions were conceived by MOIA in order to gain qualitative information on the experience of the pandemic from constituents to supplement existing large-scale survey data collected by the Boston Planning and Development Agency<sup>4</sup> and U.S Census Bureau.<sup>5</sup> This information will provide important insights directly from affected constituents, which will help shape MOIA's understanding of concerns and guide policy and programmatic work.

### Translations

The survey was translated to eight of Boston's most spoken languages through translation services. The translations were also checked by community members and native speakers to ensure that the language was easily comprehensible and clearly conveyed the same meaning as the English survey.

### Questions

The survey included questions on demographics (language, self-identification as immigrants, neighborhood of residence, employment), household characteristics (household size and number of working adults per household), and food budget (amount spent and whether financial assistance is received for food.) It also included open-ended questions on concerns about affording food, the amount of required income to match expenditures, and how a family may choose to spend funds if they had an extra \$600 per month.



4 Boston Planning & Development Agency, The Impact of COVID-19 on Immigrants: Looking Back and Looking Ahead, (Boston, MA: Boston Planning & Development Agency, n.d.).

5 Boston Planning & Development Agency, 2015-2019 American Community Survey (PUMS), (Boston, MA: Boston Planning & Development Agency, 2021).

The survey was open to responses from April 29th, 2022 through June 15th, 2022. The majority of answers were collected electronically after sending it to over 20 community partners. Additionally, MOIA staff surveyed individuals at grocery stores on May 15th, 2022 at two locations in Roxbury and Dorchester. The team identified themselves as working for the City of Boston and indicated that the survey was anonymous. This was an opportunity to connect with individuals who may not be already connected to a nonprofit partner or may not be able to fill out electronic surveys. By using this "on-the-ground" approach, the MOIA team was able to reach older adults who are less likely to respond to online surveys.

The survey showed only one question at a time, with the respondent having to hit the "next" button to move forward. This ensured that certain questions such as, "How much extra money would you need to comfortably say you can cover your bills at the end of the month?," were not biased by a subsequent question such as, "If you had an extra \$600 a month, how would you use it?".

The survey data was cleaned in order to fix and/or remove incorrectly formatted, incomplete, or undecipherable data prior to analyzing. An example of this work would be to standardize neighborhood responses such as "EastBoston", "Est Boston" and "Eastie" to "East Boston." During the analyses, outliers were excluded on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error; the details of how this work was completed by survey response can be found in the Appendix to this document. With the exception of Figure 4, which was created using DataBasic, a project of the Engagement Lab at Emerson College and the MIT Center for Civic Media that provides free web tools for data analysis and storytelling, all graphics in this report were created by MOIA as part of the analysis of results. Given the open-ended nature of several survey questions, MOIA processed the information through line-by-line coding to identify categories, which were then grouped into themes. This report highlights findings and also introduces quotes from the survey responses that reflect a variety of these themes.

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Finally, there were a few cases in which respondents provided a range of values (e.g., \$100-\$200) in response to open-ended questions. For the question on grocery expenditure, the median number of the range was used (in the examples listed above, the number would have been coded as \$150). For the responses to the question on extra money needed to cover bills, the highest discernable number was used. For the multiple-choice question on frequency of shopping trips per month, with options ranging from "one" to "five or more times" – answers that read "five or more times" were coded as five.

<sup>6</sup> Rahul Bhargava and Catherine D'ignazio, DataBasic, (Boston, MA: the Engagement Lab at Emerson College and the MIT Center for Civic Media, 2016), <https://databasic.io/en/>.

<sup>7</sup> For a full list of the survey questions in English please review the Appendix.



# SURVEY ANALYSIS

## LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

***“Expenses are very difficult, especially because of migratory status one cannot apply for government benefits.”***

— a Spanish-speaking resident of East Boston

Of the 153 individuals who took the survey, 69 completed the survey in Spanish, 45 in Mandarin and one in Cantonese, 32 in English, three in French, two in Brazilian Portuguese, and one in Haitian Creole. 90% of all respondents identify as immigrants (N = 152, one blank answer excluded).

The large uptake in Spanish- and Chinese-speaking respondents was a result of participants of MOIA’s Immigrants Lead Boston Program and a Chinatown-based community organization sharing the survey with their networks widely.

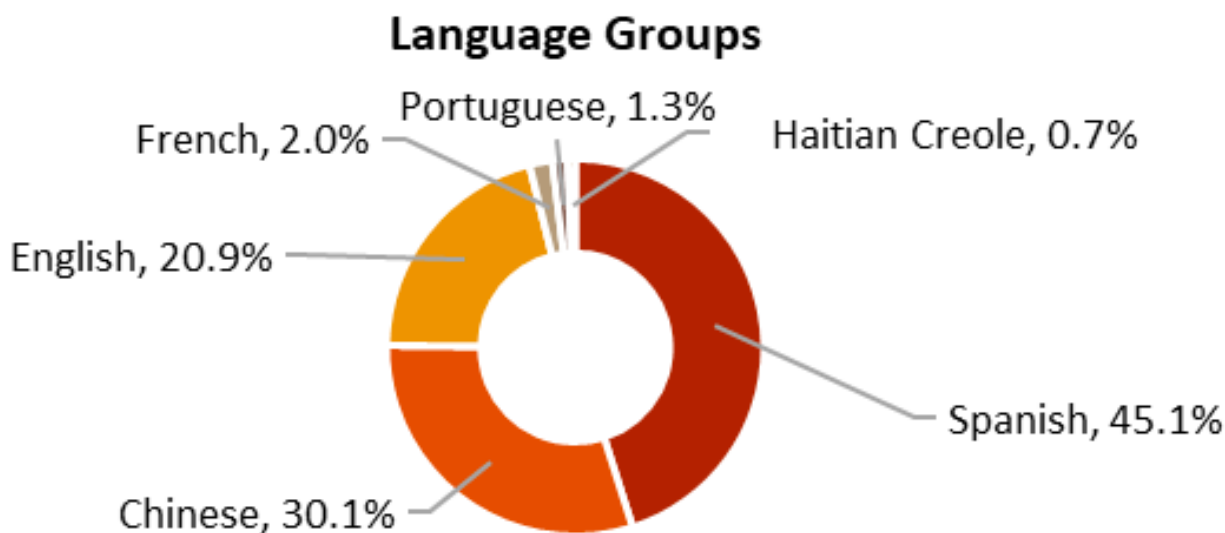


Figure 1, MOIA self-published, 2022

## BOSTON RESIDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

***“It is hard because at the moment my husband is the only one working.”***

— a Spanish-speaking resident of East Boston

Of the 151 respondents who answered the question of residency (with two blank answers excluded) 87% reported that they resided in Boston. Of the 80 respondents that provided a clear location for their employment, 62 worked in Boston. 18 listed neighborhoods outside of Boston. 31 listed that they were unemployed. Some of the uncounted answers indicated respondents’ company or industry name (20 answers), 19 left the question blank, and three wrote ‘everywhere’ or ‘surrounding areas’.

Figure 2a shows the most common neighborhoods of residence limited to MA locations.<sup>8</sup> Of the neighborhoods provided, East Boston had 46 respondents, followed by Chinatown with 26 respondents, Dorchester with 14 respondents, and Roxbury with 12 respondents. Neighborhoods of employment were more varied, when provided, and can be seen in Figure 2b.<sup>9</sup>

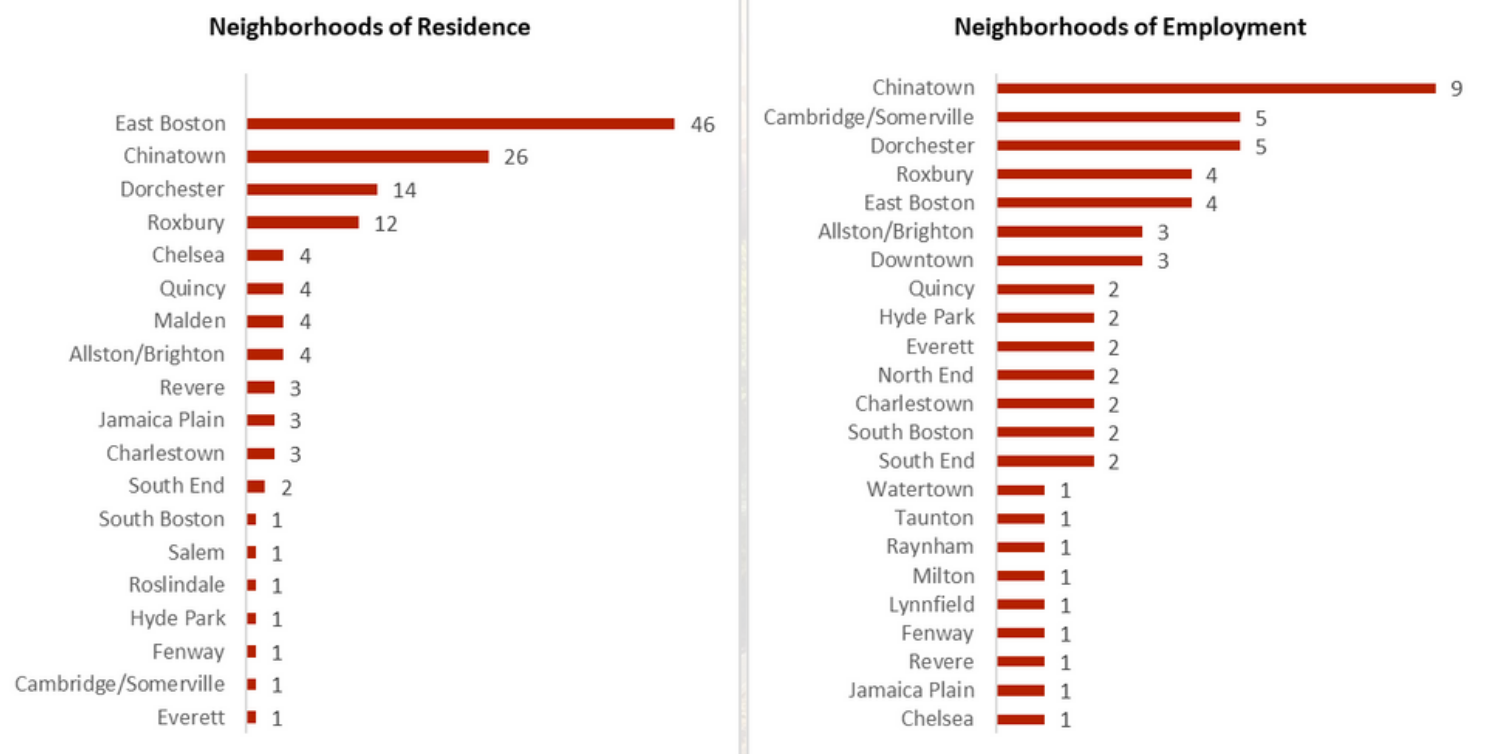


Figure 2a & 2b, MOIA self-published, 2022

<sup>8</sup>Note from the authors: answers that read ‘Boston,’ ‘NY,’ and ‘MA’ were excluded from the chart (19 total removed for neighborhoods of residence)

<sup>9</sup>Note from the authors: answers that read ‘Boston,’ ‘NY,’ and ‘MA’ were excluded from the chart (24 total removed for neighborhoods of employment)



## FOOD AFFORDABILITY

*“Now, prices went up, I just need to buy food that really is important, snacks have to be last on the list.”*

– an English-speaking resident of Charlestown

Out of the 153 respondents surveyed, 73% expressed concern about affording groceries. An additional 16% responded 'maybe/sometimes.'

- The main reason listed for concern was high prices and inflation in general, with 57 corresponding responses
- 36 responses referenced insufficient income to afford such prices
- 17 respondents commented specifically on high and rising food prices
- 22 wrote about the cost of rent, bills, and other expenses
- 16 mentioned unemployment or a limited number of working adults in their homes



Figure 3, MOIA self-published, 2022



Figure 4, keywords in response to “What is the reason for your concerns on monthly budget?”<sup>10</sup>

Other reasons for concern included job insecurity and a lack of or insufficient financial assistance (e.g., food stamps, social security.) When excluding six blank answers (N = 147), 41% of respondents stated that they receive financial assistance for food (e.g., SNAP, WIC.)

Consistent with the overall survey breakdown, most of these respondents were Spanish- and Chinese-speakers. Levels of concern about food prices were slightly higher among those who receive financial assistance (60): 78% of these respondents expressed concern, compared to 72% of those who do not receive financial assistance (87).

10 Rahul Bhargava and Catherine D'ignazio, DataBasic, (Boston, MA: the Engagement Lab at Emerson College and the MIT Center for Civic Media, 2016), <https://databasic.io/en/>.

Note: The size of the text reflects the frequency of its mentions.

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

***Between bills, food, train, and bus passes for transportation to work, it is very hard for our work salaries to cover everything.”***

— a Spanish-speaking resident of East Boston

The average household size of respondents was 3.8 people (excluding one blank answer). This is larger than the average Boston household size of 2.4 people, which tallies with larger datasets indicating that households that are foreign-born tend to be slightly larger than those that are native-born.<sup>11</sup> These households reported an average of 1.6 working adults per home (N = 146, excluding one undecipherable answer and six blank answers,) meaning that the incomes are strained to meet the self-reported budgets.

When excluding one blank answer, respondents go grocery shopping approximately 3.6 times per month. The average household that was surveyed indicated that they spent \$672 per month (three blank answers were excluded when determining this number.) This translates to an average of \$194 per person per month. This finding is concerning, as it indicates a very low food budget per person.

## EXTRA DISPOSABLE INCOME

***“I would buy more food and it would help me pay rent. It would be a great help.”***

— A Spanish speaker living in East Boston

When asked how much extra money respondents would need to comfortably say they can cover their bills at the end of the month, 125 individuals provided answers. Given the open-ended nature of the question, respondents gave a large variation of responses. When these answers were analyzed with our 1.5 margin of error, 28 outliers were excluded. On average, respondents stated that they need an extra \$626. When the outliers are included, the reported amount rose to \$1,275 due to several answers in the thousands, with one answer as high as \$20,000.

<sup>11</sup> Boston Planning & Development Agency, 2015-2019 American Community Survey (PUMS), (Boston, MA: Boston Planning & Development Agency, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Note from the authors: the average is \$562 when excluding eight outliers on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error.

<sup>13</sup> Note from the authors: the average is \$168 when excluding seven outliers on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error.



In response to the question, “If you had an extra \$600 a month, how would you use it?”, basic needs were at the forefront:

- 81 responses referenced food
- 60 responses referenced rent, bills, and large expenses, such as car repairs
- Other common responses mentioned daily needs and household items (e.g., medicine, diapers, cleaning supplies,) clothing and shoes, and leisure activities with family (e.g., dates, trips to the casino or amusement park, Happy Meals at McDonalds, movies, travel)
- There were only nine responses pertaining to savings, and three pertaining to paying off debts and loans. In other words, many respondents are not thinking about their long-term financial situation, nor are they prioritizing inter-generational needs or recreation.

When offered the space to share additional information, inflation, food, rent, bills, and low income still emerged as the main areas of concern, but a number of new issues emerged as well. For instance, there were three comments about legal status preventing government benefits and jobs, as well as deportation leading to single-parent households. Additionally, respondents wrote about various health issues, including back pain, asthmatic bronchitis, and cancer; special needs and autism were also mentioned.



## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM PEOPLE: AN ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

### BROADLY FELT IMPACTS OF COVID-19

In the past year, inflation has been an acutely felt impact of the pandemic.

***“Inflation is getting more and more intense, sometimes I don't have money for my monthly expenses,”*** a Mandarin-speaking resident of Boston shared with MOIA. With the need to ***“buy food, buy children's stuff and other daily necessities,”*** a respondent shared that it was hard to make the money “last.” Similar concerns were shared by many others. The sentiment is best encapsulated by the statement of an immigrant constituent living in Chinatown: ***“due to the inflation during COVID-19, my salaries cannot cover my expenses.”***

Unemployment and reduced working hours imposed financial and health stress on immigrants. Unlike many other Bostonians, over 30% of immigrant families have been unable to access federally funded safety nets and relief programs due to their status.<sup>14</sup> The existing equity gaps between immigrants and the rest of Bostonians have exacerbated. To withstand economic shocks, many individuals wished to switch careers during COVID-19;<sup>15</sup> however, it was difficult for immigrants to switch jobs due to language barriers, work authorization restrictions, or lack of workforce training. ***“We are a hard working family in difficult jobs,”*** a Spanish-speaking respondent of East Boston said, ***“as much as we work, we just feel more tired, and at the end of month all the money goes to rent, bills, and food.”*** In that sense, it becomes challenging for immigrants to improve their quality of life or have upward mobility.

Another factor that challenges the economic health of immigrant families is the surging rent prices across Boston.<sup>16</sup> A French-speaking resident of Roslindale said that ***“the situation is difficult for me and my family [as we are] paying bills, rent, electricity, gas, health and car insurance, food products, cosmetics and other necessities.”*** Similarly, a Spanish-speaking respondent said that ***“I do my food shopping after paying rent and bills, because I cannot do food shopping before that as I fear not making enough money.”***

14 Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, The Impact of COVID-19 on Immigrants in Massachusetts: Insights from Our Community Survey, (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, 2020), <https://www.miracoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MIRA-COVID-19-survey-report-Aug2020.pdf>.

15 Abigail Johnson Hess, “The Great Reimagination of Work: Why 50% of Workers Want to Make a Career Change,” CNBC, October 12, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/12/why-50percent-of-workers-want-to-make-a-career-change-new-survey.html>.

16 Abbey Niezgoda, “Rent Soars, Leaving Tenants Feeling ‘Priced Out’ of Boston Area,” NBC Boston, February 23, 2022, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/rent-soars-leaving-tenants-feeling-priced-out-of-boston-area/2652863/>



The combination of unemployment, inflation, and rising rent leads immigrants to reduce their spending on certain food items, such as meat and fish, and stop engaging in leisure activities.

A French-speaking respondent said that families turn to the alternatives of less healthy food because **“there is never enough money for healthy groceries.”** This respondent wished to **“eat a healthy dozen organic eggs”** if they had additional disposable income at the end of the month. A Mandarin-speaking resident echoed sentiment by stating that they would use extra cash to **“buy more food, better food, such as beef and fish.”** The impact of food affordability goes beyond that of consumption choices and its potential impacts on physical health. Often, the psychological stress accompanying these behavior modifications can be detrimental. If this gap continues to widen, immigrants will continue to recover at a slower pace from the economic shocks created by COVID-19.





## FINDINGS BY LANGUAGE GROUP

### CHINESE

***“I want to bring my child to watch movies and visit historical and cultural sites.”***

— A Chinese speaker living in Chinatown

Chinese-speakers mentioned their children, particularly within the context of education and extracurriculars, more frequently than other respondents. For example, three Chinese-speakers said they would use an extra \$600 for their children’s studies, and one said they would use it for educational activities, such as “extracurricular classes fees.” When non-Chinese-speakers mentioned their children, it was usually in the context of buying toys, food, clothing, and other daily necessities.

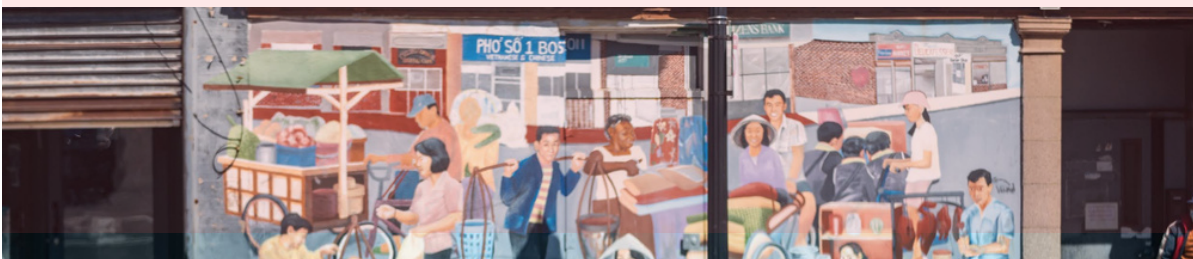
Chinese-speakers also mentioned the pandemic more frequently than other language groups. For instance, in response to the question regarding reasons for concern about affording food, only Chinese respondents mentioned the pandemic (six mentions total.) Some commented on less jobs and hours available during the pandemic. Others noted having spent more money on items such as masks and hand sanitizer.

### FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE

***“There is never enough money for healthy groceries.”***

— A French speaker living in Roxbury

An additional interesting finding is that most French and Portuguese respondents (five total) listed amounts that were significantly above average for the question on extra income required. The average among the three French respondents was \$2,600, and the average among the two Portuguese respondents was \$4,400. As noted above (page 08) and in the Appendix, these answers were excluded from the overall average of \$626 due to the large variance.



# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 and the disproportionate impact of the economic downturn has highlighted the systemic inequities immigrant households face. The purpose of this survey was to complement existing research and build a qualitative understanding of the experiences of Boston's immigrant population by directly connecting with them. MOIA helped to bring "City Hall out of City Hall" in an effort to build constituent-centered policies and programs for economic recovery in the disproportionately affected immigrant population.

Of those surveyed, 90% identified as immigrants. Most respondents were Spanish- and Chinese-speakers, followed by English-, French-, Portuguese-, and Haitian Creole-speakers. The majority of respondents expressed concern about affording food, which emerged as one of the top priorities along with rent and bills when asked how they would use extra disposable income. Very few respondents mentioned saving or paying off debts, spending on recreation, or investing in their children, meaning they are only able to budget for short-term, immediate expenses.

In other words, it is clear that the surveyed households are struggling financially to meet their daily needs, and that no single policy or intervention can on its own solve the worrying growth of equity gaps we are facing. To respond to this challenge, the City of Boston will need to continue to rely on and support the many local organizations that have tirelessly responded to the needs of their communities. Additionally, there must be greater cross-department collaboration (e.g., MOIA, the Mayor's Office of Food Justice, the Mayor's Office of Housing Stability, etc.) in order to connect and strategize with a wider range of partners working on relevant issues. Finally, promoting greater awareness of the services and resources available to immigrants in Boston is also needed, as many residents could benefit from existing programming.

As a city, we need to provide not only immediate assistance, but also long-term support in order to address the underlying conditions that made immigrant households more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic. In the short-term, to address food and rent insecurity, cash assistance should be considered to help immigrants meet their basic needs in a time of continued job insecurity and rising prices of goods, services, and housing. If these needs



are not addressed, it is unlikely they will be able to engage in long-term financial planning, and this could have significant intergenerational consequences. In the medium-term, to expand employment opportunities, the opportunity cost of enrollment in ESOL classes (from spending wage-earning hours to study English), financial literacy, and work-readiness programs for working adults needs to be addressed. The shortage of seats and social security number requirements for enrollment in some programs also need to be addressed.

In the long-term, to improve immigrants' ability to adapt and recover from future economic shocks, savings programs should be funded to help them build lasting financial health. While it is unlikely that someone who is struggling to buy groceries will be able to engage in this behavior, a two-pronged approach that provides immediate cash and partners with non-predatory savings programs can help build a sufficient financial cushion to weather short-term unemployment, emergencies such as car repairs, or build savings, allowing a family to access credit.

If we can support our immigrant Bostonians in acquiring language and work readiness skills, and provide them with both short- and long-term financial assistance, we will likely see an improvement in the overall economic health and resilience of these constituents.

# APPENDIX

**This survey was offered in the following eight languages:**

- Spanish
- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- English
- French
- Brazilian Portuguese
- Haitian Creole
- Cape Verdean Creole

**The questions in the above mentioned survey were the following (listed in English, for other languages please contact the Office for Immigrant Advancement):**

- Where do you live (neighborhood)?
- Where do you work (neighborhood)?
- Do you identify as an immigrant?
- On average, how many times a month do you go grocery shopping?
- On your usual shopping trip, how much is your grocery bill when you go grocery shopping?
- How many people do you regularly shop for?
- Are you ever concerned you won't have enough money when you go shopping?
- What is the reason for the answer above?
- How much extra money would you need to comfortably say you can cover your bills at the end of the month?
- Do you receive any financial assistance to cover the cost of your shopping (like SNAP, WIC, etc.)?
- Do you want to share anything about your budget with me? If yes, please include it here.
- How many adults work in your home?
- If you had an extra \$600 dollars a month, how would you use it?

**The breakdown of survey responses by language was as follows:**

- Spanish - 69 responses
- Mandarin - 45 responses
- Cantonese - 1 response
- English - 32 responses
- French - 3 responses
- Brazilian Portuguese - 2 responses
- Haitian Creole - 1 response
- Cape Verdean Creole - 0 responses



In this report, blank answers and non-discernable locations were excluded for analyses; for the survey question on location of employment, unemployed respondents were also excluded. Additionally, outliers were excluded on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error (see box plots below), resulting in the following:

- **Immigrant identity:** one blank answer excluded (N = 152) - of these 152 respondents, 137 identify as immigrants (90%)
- **Boston residence:** two blank answers excluded (N = 151) - of these 151 respondents, 131 live in Boston (87%)
  - Figure 2a: an additional 17 answers that read 'Boston', one answer that read 'NY,' and one answer that read 'MA' were excluded (N = 132)
- **Boston based employment:** 73 respondents provided unclear locations for employment, including 31 who listed that they were unemployed, 20 who listed their company or industry name, 19 who left the question blank, and three who wrote 'everywhere' / surrounding areas' (N = 80) - of these 80 respondents, 62 work in Boston (78%).
  - Figure 2b: an additional 22 answers that read 'Boston,' one answer that read 'NY,' and one answer that read 'MA' were excluded (N = 56)
- **Financial assistance:** six blank answers excluded (N = 147) - of these 147 respondents, 60 stated that they receive financial assistance (41%)
- **Average household size:** one blank answer excluded (N = 152) - among these 152 respondents, the average household size is 3.8 people
- **Average number of working adults per home:** one undecipherable answer and six blank answers excluded (N = 146) - among these 146 respondents, the average number of working adults per home is 1.6
- **Average number of grocery shopping trips per month:** one blank answer excluded (N = 152) - among these 152 respondents, the average number of grocery shopping trips per month is 3.6
  - i. This survey question was multiple-choice format, with options ranging from "one" to "five or more times" - answers that read "five or more times" were coded as five

### **Average food budget per household per month:**

Using a disaggregated household by household approach: three blank answers excluded (N = 150) - among these 150 respondents, the average food budget per household per month is \$672. When eight outliers were also excluded on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error, N = 142 - the average decreases from \$672 to \$562 when excluding the outliers as a result of responses of \$1,500 and over (including as high as \$5,500)

- To calculate this average, for each respondent, the number of times they stated that they go food shopping per month was multiplied by the amount they stated that they usually spend per trip (when a range of spending was provided, the median value was used). Then, the average was taken of all of these values. E.g.: 2 x month, \$250 - \$300 per outing →  $2 \times \$275 = \$550$  per household per month.

### **Average food budget per person per month:**

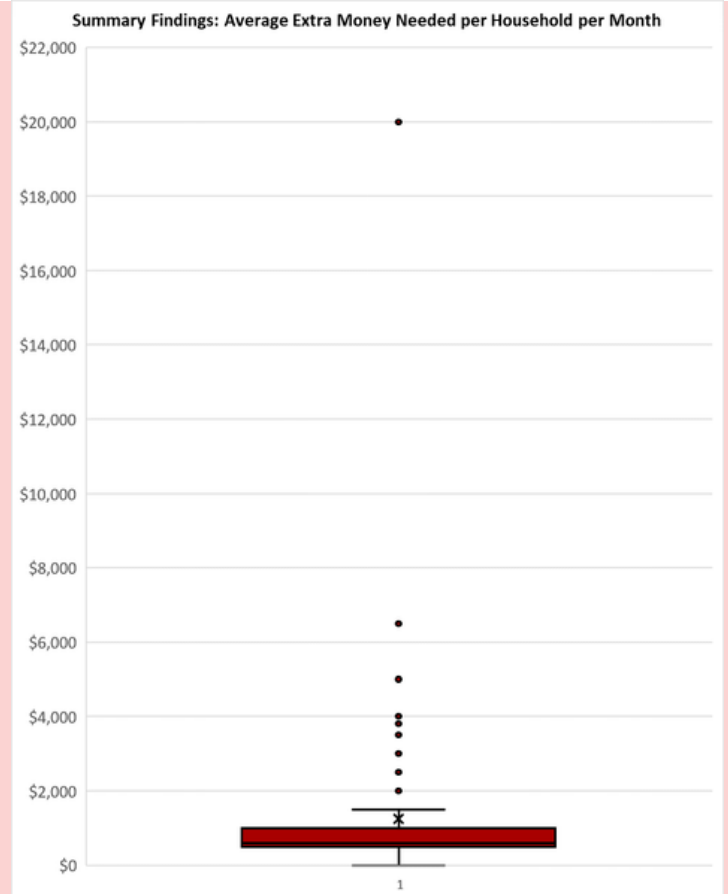
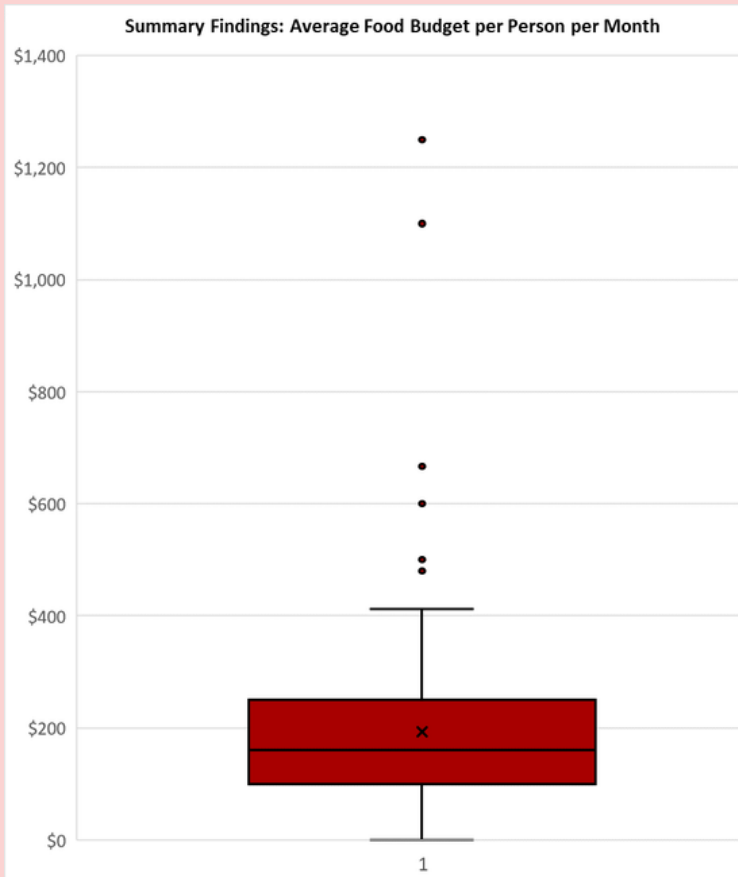
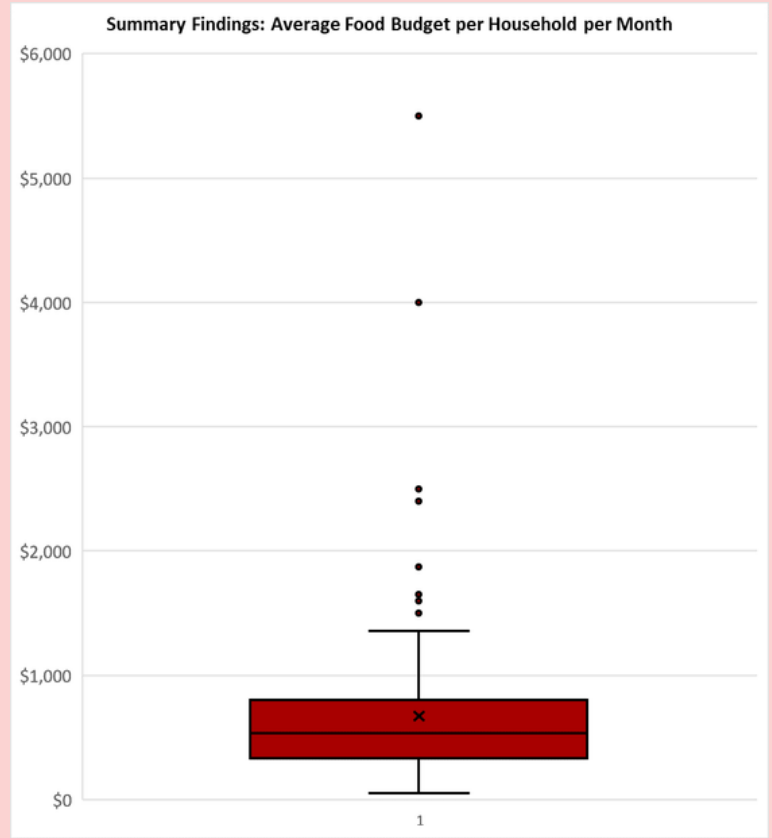
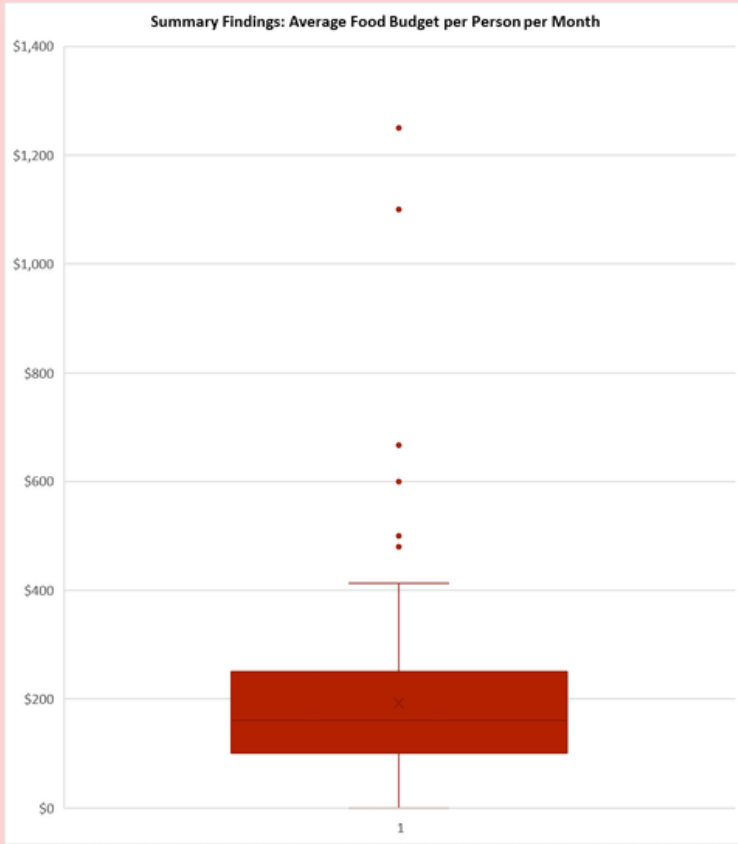
Three blank answers excluded (N = 150) - among these 150 respondents, the average food budget per person per month is \$194. When seven outliers were also excluded on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error, N = 143 - the average decreases from \$194 to \$168 when excluding the outliers as a result of responses of responses of \$480 and over (including as high as \$1,250)

- To calculate this average, a disaggregated household by household approach was used. For each respondent, the number of times they stated that they go food shopping per month was multiplied by the amount they stated that they usually spend per trip (when a range of spending was provided, the median value was used). Then, for each respondent, this value was divided by the number of people that they stated they regularly shop for. Finally, the average was taken of all of these values. E.g.: 3 times a month, \$250 - \$300 per outing, 4 people →  $3 \times \$275 = \$825 \rightarrow \$825 / 4 = \$206.25$  per person/per month.

### **Average extra income required per household:**

28 blank answers excluded (N = 125) - among these 125 respondents, the average extra income required per household is \$1,275; when 25 outliers were also excluded on the basis of a 1.5 margin of error, N = 100 - the average decreases from \$1,275 to \$626 when excluding the outliers as a result of responses of \$2,000 and over (including as high as \$20,000)

- When a range was provided, the highest discernable number was used. The average was then taken of all these values.





# ENDNOTES

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# 2022

**CITY of BOSTON**



Immigrant Advancement